

As delivered

ADDRESS OF
SECRETARY OF STATE
HENRY A. KISSINGER
TO THE
CONFERENCE OF TLATELOLCO

MEXICO CITY

FEBRUARY 21, 1974

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Mr. President, distinguished colleagues and friends.

When I listened to the previous speakers, I was seized by an uncharacteristic feeling of humility. It became clear to me that in the art of epic oratory, the U.S. is an underdeveloped country.

We owe our host country and its leaders a profound debt of gratitude for sponsoring this meeting and for the excellence of the arrangements which they have made. Personally, I have spent many happy days in this great country. And I have had the privilege of the advice, wisdom and on occasion the tenacious opposition of the President of Mexico and his Foreign Minister who defend their concept of justice and their national interest with passion and skill. I look forward to an equally frank, friendly, intense and constructive dialogue with all my colleagues at this conference.

On a plaque in Mexico's imposing Museum of Anthropology are etched phrases which carry a special meaning for this occasion:

"Nations find courage and confidence to face the future by looking to the greatness of their past. Mexican, seek yourself in the mirror of this greatness. Stranger, confirm here the unity of human destiny. Civilizations pass; but men will always reflect the glory of the struggle to build them".

We assemble in the splendid shadows of history's monuments. They remind us of what can be achieved by inspiration and of what can be lost when peoples miss their opportunity. We in the Americas now have a great opportunity to vindicate our old dream of building a new world of justice and peace, to assure the well-being of our peoples --and to leave what we achieve as a monument to our striving.

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Our common impulse in meeting here is to fulfill the promise of America as the continent which beckoned men to fulfill what was best in them. Our common reality is the recognition of our diversity. Our common determination is to derive strength from that diversity, and forge our historical and geographical links into shared purpose and endeavor.

In this spirit the United States offered a new dialogue last October.

In this spirit the countries of the Americas responded in Bogota last November.

We meet here as equals --representatives of our individual modes of life, but united by one aspiration-- to build a new community.

We have an historic foundation on which to build; we live in a world that gives our enterprise a special meaning and urgency.

On behalf of President Nixon, I commit the United States to undertake this venture with dedication and energy.

The U. S. Commitment

One concern has dominated all other as I have met privately with some of my colleagues in this room. Does the United States really care? Is this another exercise of high-sounding declarations followed by long periods of neglect?

These questions --not unrelated to historical experience --define our task. On behalf of my colleagues of the American delegation and myself let me stress that we are here to give effect to a new attitude and to help shape a new policy. The presence of so many distinguished leaders from the United States Congress underlines the depth of the United States concern for its neighbors and the determination

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of our government to implement our agreements through a partnership between the Executive and Legislative branches.

The time has come to infuse the Western Hemisphere relationships with a new spirit. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States declared what those outside this hemisphere should not do within it. In the 1930's we stipulated what the United States would not do.

Today we meet on the basis of your agenda and our common needs. I agree with one of my distinguished colleagues who said on arrival that the time had come to meet as brothers, not as sons. Today -- together -- we can begin giving expression to our common aspirations and start shaping our common future.

In my view, our fundamental task at this meeting -- more important even than the specifics of our agenda -- is to set a common direction and infuse our efforts with new purpose. Let us therefore avoid both condescension and confrontation. If the United States is not to presume to supply all the answers, neither should it be asked to bear all the responsibilities. Let us together bring about a new commitment to the inter-American community.

Let us not be satisfied with proclamations but chart a program of work worthy of the challenge before us.

Let us create a new spirit in our relations -- the spirit of Tlatelolco.

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An Interdependent World

A century ago a U.S. President described to the Congress of his time the difficulties facing the country: "It is a condition which confronts us -- not a theory."

The condition we confront today is a world where inter-dependency is a fact, not a choice.

The products of man's technical genius -- weapons of incalculable power, a global economic system, instantaneous communications, a technology that consumes finite resources at an ever expanding rate -- have compressed this planet and multiplied our mutual dependence. The problems of peace, of justice, of human dignity, of hunger and inflation and pollution, of the scarcity of physical materials and the surplus of spiritual despair, cannot be resolved on a national basis. All are now caught up in the tides of world events -- consumers and producers, the affluent and the poor, the free and the oppressed, the mighty and the weak.

The world and this Hemisphere can respond in one of two ways.

There is the path of autarchy. Each nation can try to exploit its particular advantages and skills, and bargain bilaterally for what it needs. Each nation can try to look after itself and shrug its shoulders at the plight of those less well endowed.

But history tells us that this leads to ever more vicious competition, the waste of resources, the stunting of technological advance, and -- most fundamentally -- growing political tensions which unravel the fabric of global stability. If we take this route, we and our children will pay a terrible price.

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Or we can take the path of collaboration. Nations can recognize that only in working with others can they most effectively work for themselves. A cooperative world reflects the imperatives of technical and economic necessity, but above all the sweep of human aspirations.

The United States is pledged to this second course. We believe that we of the Americas should undertake it together. This Hemisphere is a reflection of mankind. Its diversity reflects the diversity of the globe. It knows the afflictions and frustrations of the impoverished. At the same time, many of its members are leaders among modernizing societies. Much has been done to overcome high mortality rates, widespread illiteracy, and grinding poverty. This Hemisphere uniquely includes the perceptions of the post-industrial societies, of those who are only beginning to sample the benefits of modernization and of those who are in mid-passage.

The Americas reach out to other constellations as well. The nations of Latin America and the Caribbean share much of the stirrings of the Third World. The United States is engaged in the maintenance of peace on a global basis. Pursuing our separate ways narrowly, we could drift apart towards different poles. Working together, we can reinforce our well-being and strengthen the prospects for global cooperation.

So let us begin in this Hemisphere. If we, here in this room, fail to grasp the consequences of interdependence, if we cannot make the multiplicity of our ties a source of unity and strength, then the prospects for success elsewhere are dim indeed. The world community which we seek to build should have a Western Hemisphere community as one of its central pillars.

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President Echeverria foresaw the gathering force of interdependence in 1972 when he set forth his Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States as a guide for the conduct of relations among countries at different levels of economic development. Last September before the United Nations General Assembly I endorsed that concept. At first, some were concerned because they saw the Charter as a set of unilateral demands; it has since become clear that it is a farsighted concept of mutual obligations. In the emerging world of interdependence, the weak as well as the strong have responsibilities, and the world's interest is each nation's interest.

We can start by making the concept of the Charter a reality in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States View of the American Community

The United States will do its full part to see that our enterprise succeeds. We can make a major contribution, but it would be in nobody's interest if we raised impossible expectations, leaving our peoples frustrated and our community empty.

We will promise only what we can deliver. We will make what we can deliver count.

I have carefully studied the agenda for this meeting you prepared in Bogota. I will respond in detail to its specifics in our private sessions. But I will say here that I have come to a greater understanding of the deeply felt motivations behind the phrases of this agenda.

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You are concerned:

- that the United States has put aside its special commitment to the Hemisphere;
- that we will allow old issues to go unresolved while new ones are created;
- that we seek not community but dominance;
- that our relationship does not adequately contribute to human welfare in the hemisphere, that it is often irrelevant to your needs and an obstacle to their fulfillment.

In response let me outline the direction the United States proposes to its friends in rededicating itself to a new era of Western Hemisphere relationships. I look forward to hearing your own views so that together we can make the Western Hemisphere Community a reality.

The United States will do its utmost to settle outstanding differences. During the past year, the United States and Mexico solved the long-standing Colorado River salinity dispute. Two weeks ago Panama and the United States -- taking account of the advice of their partners at Bogota -- signed a document that foreshadows a new relationship. And just 48 hours ago, Peru and the United States settled a dispute over compensation for the exercise of Peru's sovereign right to nationalize property for public purposes.

The United States is prepared to work with the other nations of this hemisphere on methods to eliminate new disputes or to mitigate their effect.

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Some of our most troublesome problems have arisen over differences concerning the respective rights and obligations of private United States firms operating in foreign countries, and the countries which host them.

On the one hand, in keeping with the Calvo Doctrine, most nations of this hemisphere affirm that a foreign investor has no right to invoke the protection of his home government. On the other hand, the United States has held that nations have the right to espouse the cause of their investors. This conviction is reflected in the legislative provisions of the Gonzales and Hickenlooper Amendments.

Realistically, we must admit that these two conceptions cannot be quickly reconciled. But the United States is prepared to begin a process to this end immediately and to mitigate their effects. Even before a final resolution of the philosophical and legal issues, we are ready to explore means by which disputes can be removed from the forefront of our inter-governmental relations.

In our private meetings I shall make specific proposals to establish agreed machinery which might narrow the scope of disputes. We might consider the establishment of a working group to examine various procedures for fact finding, conciliation, or the settlement of disputes. Other approaches are possible, and I shall welcome the views of my colleagues. Let me affirm here that a procedure acceptable to all the parties would remove these disputes as factors in United States decisions respecting assistance relationships with host countries.

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We would be prepared to discuss with our Congress appropriate modifications of our legislation.

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But we cannot achieve our goals simply by remedying specific grievances. A special community can only emerge if we infuse it with life and substance.

We must renew our political commitment to a Western Hemisphere system. Thomas Macaulay once observed, "It is not the machinery we employ, but the spirit we are of that binds men together." We are here because we recognize the need for cooperation. Yet we can only cooperate if our people truly believe that we are united by common purposes and a sense of common destiny.

The United States will be guided by these principles:

- we will not impose our political preferences;
- we will not intervene in the domestic affairs
of others;
- we will seek a free association of proud peoples.

In this way, the Western Hemisphere community can make its voice and interests felt in the world.

We realize that United States global interests sometimes lead to actions that have a major effect on our sister republics. We understand, too, that there is no wholly satisfactory solution to this problem.

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However, to contribute to the sense of community we all seek, the United States here commits itself to close and constant consultation with its hemispheric associates on political and economic issues of common interest -- particularly when these issues vitally affect the interests of our partners in the Western Hemisphere.

In my view, the best way to coordinate policies is to make systematic attempt to shape the future. I therefore recommend that today's meeting be considered the first of a series. The foreign ministers assembled here should meet periodically for an informal review of the international situation and of common Hemispheric problems. In the interval between our meetings, the heads of our planning staffs or senior officials with similar responsibilities should meet on a regular basis to assess progress on a common agenda. The principle of consultation on matters affecting each other's interests should be applied to the fullest extent possible.

Specifically:

-- The United States is prepared to consult and adjust its positions on the basis of reciprocity, in the multilateral trade negotiations.

-- The United States also recognizes a fundamental congruity of interests among the countries of the Hemisphere in global monetary matters. We favor a strong voice for Latin America in the management of a new monetary system -- just as we favor its effective participation in the reform of this system.

-- The United States is ready to undertake prior consultation in other international negotiations such as the Law of the Sea Conference, the World Food Conference and the World Population Conference.

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The Western Hemisphere should promote a decent life for all its citizens.

No community is worthy of its name that does not actively foster the dignity and prosperity of its peoples. The United States as the richest and most powerful country in the Hemisphere recognizes a special obligation in this regard.

Let me sketch here the program which President Nixon has authorized and which I shall discuss in greater detail with my colleagues this afternoon.

-- First, in trade. During the period of great economic uncertainty arising from the energy situation, it is essential that nations behave cooperatively and not take protective or restrictive action. I pledge to you today that the United States will do its utmost to avoid placing any new limitations on access by Latin America to its domestic market.

In the same spirit we renew our commitment to the system of Generalized Tariff Preferences. We shall strongly support this legislation. Once it is enacted, we will consult closely with you on how it can be most beneficial to your needs.

-- Second, in science and technology. We want to improve our private and governmental efforts to make available needed technology, suited to varying stages of development in such vital areas as education, housing and agriculture. Private enterprise is the most effective carrier of technology across national borders, but government can usefully appraise the overall needs and spur progress. The United States therefore recommends that we establish an Inter-American Commission on Science and Technology. It should be composed of leading scientists and experts from all the Americas and report to governments on the basis of regular meetings.

-- Third, in energy. This hemisphere, linking oil-producing and oil-consuming countries, is uniquely situated for cooperative solutions of this problem. The United States is prepared to share research for the development of energy sources. We will encourage the Inter-American Development Bank to adapt

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its lending and fund-raising activities to cushion the current strains. We are also prepared to explore ways of financing oil deficits, including the removal of remaining institutional impediments to your access to United States capital markets.

-- Fourth, in development assistance. The United States government in its Executive Branch is committed to maintain our aid levels, despite rising energy costs. On the other hand, the development problem can no longer be resolved simply by accelerating official assistance. We need a comprehensive review and recommendations on how all flows of capital and technology -- whether from concessional assistance, world capital markets or export credits -- can contribute most effectively to hemispheric needs. I recommend charging an inter-American body with these tasks.

-- Fifth, in reshaping the inter-American system. We must identify and preserve those aspects of the Rio Treaty and the Organization of American States which have shielded the Hemisphere from outside conflict and helped preserve regional peace.

Some form of institutional structure for peace and cooperation is clearly necessary. However, we must reinforce the formal structure of the OAS by modernizing its institutions and agreeing on the principles of inter-American relations. The United States is prepared to cooperate in creative adjustments to meet new conditions.

Next Steps

A Spanish poet once wrote: "Traveler, there is no path; paths are made by walking."

This is our most immediate need. We are not here to write a communique but to chart a course. Our success will be measured by whether we in fact start a journey. I suggest we move ahead in three ways:

-- First, let us make clear to our peoples that we do have a common destiny and a modern framework for effective cooperation.

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-- Second, let us agree on an agenda for the Americas; a course of actions that will give substance to our consensus and inspiration to our peoples.

-- Third, let us define a program that brings that agenda to life.

Mr. President, my distinguished colleagues, four centuries ago totally alien cultures met for the first time near here. We are moving towards a world whose demands upon us are nearly as alien to our experience as were the Spaniards and the Aztecs to each other.

Today, if we are to meet the unprecedented challenge of an interdependent world, we will also have to summon courage, faith, and dedication. The United States believes we can build a world worthy of the best in us in concert with our friends and neighbors. We want future generations to say that in 1974, in Mexico, the Nations of the Western Hemisphere took a new road and proclaimed a common destiny.

I am reminded of the closing words of the remarkable book by an author whose human insight we recognize in spite of very real and very deep political differences. "People condemned to a hundred years of solitude do not have a second opportunity on earth." We are meeting in a moment of opportunity for the Americas. We can choose community or solitude, fulfillment or frustration.

One hundred years hence, let men say we chose community.

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